

## When to Apply Fertilizer

The best time to apply fertilizer depends on the type of grass in your lawn. The fertilizer application dates below are recommended for a healthy, even-growing lawn.

### *Bermudagrass*

May 1, June 1, July 1, August 1, and September 1

### *Buffalograss*

May 1 and August 1

### *Zoysiagrass*

May 1, June 1, and September 1

### *Tall Fescue, Bluegrass, Perennial Ryegrass*

March 1, May 1, October 1, and December 1

Fewer applications of slow release fertilizer are necessary for Bermudagrass because more nitrogen can be applied per application. Therefore, the July and September fertilizer applications on Bermudagrass can be dropped if a slow release fertilizer is used. A slow release fertilizer is also recommended for the May application on fescue, bluegrass, and ryegrass lawns.

## Watering Plan

Turfgrasses vary in their need for water. The following list ranks the varieties that use the most water to those that use the least:

1. Tall Fescue, Bluegrass, Perennial Ryegrass (require the most water)
2. Hybrid Bermuda such as Tifway and Zoysiagrass
3. Common Bermuda
4. Buffalograss (requires the least water)

Bermudagrass lawns usually require about 1 inch of water every week during the summer. Zoysiagrass and tall fescue lawns usually require between 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 2 inches per week if in full sun. The best time to water is early morning. Evening is the worst time to water because the lawn stays wet all night, encouraging lawn diseases.

## If you don't bag your grass clippings, you will:

- Save time and energy
- Recycle plant nutrients
- Reduce solid wastes in landfills

## To Learn More About Recycling Yard Waste

- Contact your county Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service office. The phone number is listed under County Government. Ask for:  
L-251 Mulching with Wood Chips  
L-252 Leaf Composting
- Watch "Oklahoma Gardening" on OETA Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. or Sundays at 3:30 p.m.
- Find more information, including OSU Extension Facts, at: [www.okstate.edu/oces/](http://www.okstate.edu/oces/)
- This brochure and others may be found on the PEARL database at: [www.agweb.okstate.edu/pearl/waste/](http://www.agweb.okstate.edu/pearl/waste/)



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Recycling Yard Waste:  
"Don't Bag It"

# LAWN CARE PLAN



L-253

# Save time, energy, and money with the "Don't Bag It" lawn care plan!

## If You "Don't Bag It" . . .

From March to October, grass clippings increase the volume of residential solid waste 20 to 50 percent. Some landfills may ban yard waste. A mulching lawnmower is a good alternative to land-filling. You can help reduce this "needless waste" by following the "Don't Bag It" lawn care plan.

### You Save Time

Experience with "Don't Bag It" shows annual mowing time reduced by up to one-third by not bagging clippings.

### You Save Energy

Your mower will be easier to push with no heavy grass-filled bag attached.

### You Save Money

- You buy fewer garbage bags.
- You keep your garbage bill lower. The city does not have to collect or dispose of grass clippings.
- This extends landfill life.

## Your Lawn Will Thank You

Grass clippings that are returned to the lawn rapidly decompose at the "grass-roots" level. Returning grass clippings to the lawn improves water-use efficiency, recycles plant nutrients, and gives your lawn a more uniform green color.

## Mowing Plan

### Setting Up Your Lawn Mower

You don't have to have a mulching mower. However, a mulching kit installed on your mower, or a new mulching mower, chops grass blades very fine and often improves lawn appearance. Talk to your mower dealer about a mulching kit for your mower.

### When to Mow

The "rule of thumb" for mowing is to remove no more than one-third of the leaf blade. You may mow more often, but experience with "Don't Bag It" shows that annual mowing time is reduced by about one-third.

### Mowing Height

The following chart shows the recommended mowing schedule for "Don't Bag It."

Type of grass	Mower setting	Mow at this height
	(inches)	
Common Bermuda Buffalo	2	3
Hybrid Bermuda or Zoysia	1	1 1/2
Tall Fescue, Bluegrass, Ryegrass	3	4

Grass clippings left on your lawn will not contribute to thatch. Thatch is caused by tough runners, rhizomes, and roots. Grass blades are tender plant parts that rapidly decompose and contain about 4% nitrogen, 1% phosphorus, and 2% potassium.

## Fertilizing Plan

The basis for determining fertilizer needs is a soil test. Have your soil tested every three years to determine the need for pH adjustment, phosphorus, and potassium. See your local Oklahoma Cooperative Extension office for more information about soil testing.

The lawn care plan "Don't Bag It" works best with a slow, even-growing lawn. Fertilizer application rates, frequency of application, ratio of nutrients, and the source of the nitrogen all affect how fast your lawn grows.

### What Fertilizer to Apply

The following chart shows some common fertilizer formulations.

Fertilizer Analysis N-P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> -K <sub>2</sub> O	Application Rate lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. per application
12-4-8	8.3
15-5-10	6.7
21-7-14	4.7
16-4-8	6.3
20-5-10	5.0
27-3-3	3.7
32-0-0	3.1
46-0-0	2.2

Fertilizer can be in a quick release or a slow release form. Some of the fertilizer formulations above are available in a slow release form. Slow release fertilizer works best with "Don't Bag It."

**Ask your fertilizer dealer about slow release fertilizer.**